

Strategic Warning Staff

Washington, D.C. 20301

18 September 1981

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER FOR WARNING

FROM: Strategic Warning Staff

SUBJECT: The Aden Treaty: Implications for Warning

The attached analysis raises the Aden Treaty as a warning matter. We believe there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the treaty was probably promoted by the Soviet Union as part of a new strategic approach to the region. The signatories can now exercise greater freedom of movement in achieving their individual parochial goals while gaining collective political strength through the tripartite agreement. The Soviets now may support the Aden Treaty organization without the necessity of being tied too closely to actions of the individual member states. Another significant change is the direct linkage to the Warsaw Pact achieved through the Czech treaties with Ethiopia and PDRY.

We are aware that the Defense Intelligence Agency is preparing an appraisal of the Aden Treaty and that they are generally in agreement with the analysis expressed in the accompanying report. Given the increase in US interests in the area, especially the presence and visibility of US forces anticipated this fall, we recommend that the report be forwarded to the appropriate NIOs for comment and/or discussion at upcoming NIO warning meetings.

Col, USA
Acting Director, SWS

Attachment

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The Aden Treaty: Implications for Warning

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This report examines the implications of the recent Ethiopian-Libyan-Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) Cooperation Treaty signed in Aden on 20 August 1981. It outlines the as yet circumstantial evidence of a Soviet role in promoting this new alliance. The report outlines a new approach by the USSR to:

- increase Soviet influence in the Arabian Peninsula/Horn of Africa area;
- counter the Camp David Accords and the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council;
- develop a low risk proxy threat to the US Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) and its facilities.

In conclusion this report warns of the threat this treaty presents to US interests in that we may be witnessing the beginning of a major new Soviet foreign policy strategy in the Middle East.

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Diplomatic Preparations and Background Information:**1. Information**

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indicated that the Soviets through Ali Nasir Muhammad, the President of PDRY, were making arrangements to promote a new alliance in the Middle East which would be favorable to their interests. The Soviet relationship with the leadership in Aden has been probably closer than with any other country in the area. Soviets are apparently able to influence Ali Nasir Muhammad through Marxists and pro-Soviet Baathists in the PDRY government. Since early this year there have been a number of diplomatic visits by South Yemeni, Libyan, and Ethiopian officials to set the groundwork for this recently-signed treaty. In addition Georges Hawi, leader of the Lebanese Communist Party, has played a significant role. He made a visit to Ethiopia where he met Mengistu after seeing Soviet leaders in Moscow and Ali Nasir Muhammad in Aden.

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these efforts by Ali Nasir Muhammad and Hawi were the first stage of a Soviet plan to forge an Arab-Soviet Bloc that would replace the Rejection Front and buttress the Soviet position in the Middle East.

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The PLO and the Lebanese Communist Party have assured Ali Nasir Muhammad that this front would have full Soviet backing. Subsequent events, including the signing of the treaty between Libya, Ethiopia, and PDRY, lend credence [redacted]

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2. Syria and Algeria were reluctant to join in this new alliance. The Algerians apparently disapproved of it outright. The Syrian refusal to join this alliance is based on the perception that it is of a transitory nature and not of direct benefit to Syria. The Syrians see these "progressive" states as espousing Communist goals. There are also indications that Saudi Arabia may have put pressure on the Syrians not to join such a venture. USSR has in the past pressed Syria to improve its relations with Ethiopia [redacted]

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3. Since the end of June 1981, when Soviet Deputy Defense Minister, Sergey Sokolov, visited both PDRY and Ethiopia, there has been a distinct shift in PDRY and Ethiopia's attitude toward the West. Contacts between Ethiopia and West Europeans had been a matter of dissension in the Ethiopian leadership. Subsequent to the Sokolov visit contacts with the West were deemphasized. The PDRY government took an increasingly hard-line approach in its relations with the West and heated up its rhetoric with regard to the US RDJTF. [redacted]

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The Aden Summit, the Treaty and Its Aftermath:

4. Ethiopian President Mengistu and Libya's Qadhafi met in Aden with Ali Nasir Muhammad on 17 August in a summit meeting which lasted several days. The resulting treaty which has been published has been called the Ethiopian, Libyan, PDRY Cooperation Treaty. None of the published paragraphs are particularly threatening, and subsequently there has been much speculation on secret agreements which may be part of the alliance. In the immediate aftermath of the summit meeting and public release of information on the Cooperation Treaty, there has been a concerted effort on the part of South Yemen, Ethiopia, and the Soviet Union to downplay the dangers which other countries in the region may see in this alliance. [redacted]

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5. Immediately after the signing, Ali Nasir Muhammad is reported to have sent an envoy to Sanaa to reassure the Yemeni Arab Republic of its good intentions. North Yemeni President Salih, already in a precarious position due to pressure from the National Democratic Front (NDF), could not have taken too much comfort from this visit. [redacted]

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Addis Ababa is sending a high-level delegation to Khartoum to assure the Sudanese that there is no need for fear on their part due to the signing of this treaty.

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Revised Soviet Attitudes Towards Economic Assistance and East European Support for the New Alliance:

8. In early August a high-level Soviet economic delegation accomplished very little during a week-long visit to Ethiopia. No significant agreements came out of the visit, and Ethiopian leadership wondered why the Soviets had bothered to make the trip. Follow-on actions in Moscow after Ethiopian participation in the signing of the new tripartite treaty were very successful. A long-delayed agreement on a hydro-electric project was signed and an agricultural grant was approved for areas in western Ethiopia.

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9. The developments surrounding preparation and signing of this treaty have also been accompanied by an apparent upswing in East European interest and contacts with the member countries. Almost as an immediate follow-on to the signing has been the early September visit by Czech President Gustav Husak to Libya, Ethiopia and Aden. At first, Husak's visit to Libya was viewed in diplomatic circles as merely a Soviet attempt to placate the Libyans for the lack of overt Soviet support in the aftermath of the Gulf of Sidra incident. In the past, the Czech President has acted for the Soviets in carrying out their programs in foreign affairs. The inclusion of Ethiopia and PDRY in the itinerary as well as the signing of Czech Friendship Treaties with each of them suggests Husak's purpose was to demonstrate support for the new alliance as opposed to merely a morale building trip for the Libyans' benefit.

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The Aden Treaty and Continuing Conflicts in the Area.

10. The treaty has been seen in a number of regional capitals as an overt manifestation of increased threats to their stability. The mere presence of Qadhafi as a party to this treaty gives them reason to fear.

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11. In Sudan, Libyan sponsorship of Sudanese opposition groups has led to an effort on the part of Sudanese officials to expose dissidents within their military establishment.

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Some political impact of the treaty is also seen in the efforts of the Yemeni Arab Republic to help to counter the tripartite alliance. The Yemeni's have cited Qadhafi's speeches as provocations. Qadhafi has been reported to have advocated unity for the Yemeni's and even a march on Sanaa. The north Yemeni's have also sent a military delegation to Moscow to ask for additional arms.

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Implications for Warning

15. In the aftermath of the Treaty signing in Aden

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Much of the public rhetoric, especially on the part of Ali Nasir Muhammad, has centered on the treaty as a necessity due to the increasing US role in the area. The USSR is defended and the US, especially the RDJTF, is attacked. Yet no public mention has been made by the three principals of military cooperation under the Treaty. Some third country diplomatic observations include the assertion that Qadhafi wants to use the alliance to obtain troops for his ventures in Africa.

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While this may be true, focusing on this aspect of the problem loses sight of the fact that Moscow-inspired Ali Nasir Muhammad was the prime mover behind the preparation and the summit which resulted in the treaty. To date, the various reports touching on unpublicized military agreements indicate that some type of joint military activity is planned. It appears to be based on Libyan resources and equipment and PDRY and Ethiopian manpower.

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It remains to be seen whether or not these three so different parties to the Aden treaty can fulfill the commitments necessary to establish a combined military force. The upswing in USSR/East European involvement however may be an indication that the Soviet Union is intent on seeing the alliance a success. It is clearly to the Soviet's advantage to promote such a joint command as a threat and counter to RDJTF facilities arrangements. Such a pro-Soviet standing force would provide the USSR with a low risk counter to threaten potential US RDJTF facilities in the area. But the establishment of such a command is clearly a long-term project. The course of events during the next year should reveal whether or not this force will actually come into being. The removal of any one of the three leaders, by whatever means, could destroy the alliance at any time.

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16. In the near term there are some very real threats

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An increase in the quantity and quality of Libyan aid to the Somali Salvation Front with the aim of overthrowing the Siad Barre government is also anticipated.

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reporting also indicates that we might expect some limited but overt action against the US presence in the Horn of Africa area by PDRY or Ethiopia.

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17. In conclusion, it appears that events of the past several months indicate a more active Soviet foreign policy effort in the Middle East. The evidence now available points to a Soviet role in the conception of the PDRY-Libyan-Ethiopian Cooperation Treaty. The establishment of this alliance combined with an apparent increasing of member ties with East European States, as manifested by the PDRY-Czech and Ethiopian-Czech Treaties, signals an accelerated Soviet effort to increase its influence in the area. The Soviets will continue to promote military cooperation among their client states which provides a potential to oppose US interests in a low risk manner with surrogate forces. The Soviets appear to be building a framework which will provide a forum for alternatives to the Camp David Accords and the activities of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Finally, the, as yet, not clearly defined military aspects of the new alliance could provide a range of threats to the RDJTF both near and long term.

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